November 2001

ALABAMA CHESS ANTICS

"When you study openings, you learn openings; when you study endings, you learn chess."

-Jose Raul Capablanca

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Bill Melvin

The unofficial Fiscal Year for the Alabama Chess Federation (ACF) runs from Labor Day to Labor Day. The State Championship sees us crown new champions and elect new officers. The out-going officers this time are Lamar Causey and Jeff Lake. I wish them the best and encourage them to continue their worthwhile contributions to Alabama chess.

Our new Scholastic Vice-President is Dale Robbins. Dale is the most active organizer for scholastic chess in the state. He has been publishing the ChessKids Antics for the past year and has organized innumerable scholastic championships over the years. His energy and enthusiasm are contagious and we are blessed to have him on the ACF Executive Board.

Our new Editor is Steven Dowd. Steven is relatively new to Alabama chess but has already made vast improvements to the chess scene in Birmingham. Rick Aeria left some big shoes to fill organizationally when he went back to California and Steven has stepped up and proved to be a true leader. He is also a talented chess player closing in on the Master title. I look forward to seeing him reach that goal in these pages over the coming months.

With the proven teamwork of Caesar Lawrence, Vasha Rosenblum and myself, I'm anticipating a very smooth and productive year as an organization. Don't hesitate to contact me personally if you have any questions or concerns about improving Alabama chess.

The biggest news at the State Championship Business Meeting was the re-write of the ACF By-Laws. Dr. Ken Sloan put together a draft version of the new By-Laws which were made available to all interested parties at the meeting. The draft version will be fine-tuned (and is available for review in this issue - Ed.) and then voted on at the Queen of Hearts Business Meeting in February.

All is well. Enjoy the issue!

From the Editor

I certainly thank Bill for the fine introduction. I have been playing chess, off and on, since 1971, having learnt the moves at age 13. I was a very active player in my then-native Illinois until about age 18, going from my first rating of 1324 to about 2060. I then "got serious" about school, marriage, and family, and only played on rare occasions until 1999, when I decided I really wanted to play again.

Compared to what I saw in Illinois in 1979, Alabama had little chess activity going on in 1999, and I hooked up with Rick Aeria to start directing activities in Birmingham. Today we have the most active club in the state, if you go by number of USCF rated games played. I also continued to play when I was not directing, and just this month, by luck or skill, hit 2201 on the USCF's website this month, which, given my normal inactivity during football season (I married an Alabama football fan), should mean I will be a national master in the USCF Annual Rating List.

I think there is a lot of talent in Alabama, and along with my organizing activities, would like to see Antics become a quality chess magazine equal to those in other states. For that, I will need games and columns. And yes, those games and columns will have to come from you. Next month, I have a slew of games from Matthew Puckett to publish, but would also love to see games from players at all levels. Those of you who have been around chess a long time may remember the Robertson Sillars' column entitled Reader's Showcase in which he published games, mainly from lower-rated players. I would love to get a volunteer to run such a column. You don't have to be a master to run such a column; Mr. Sillars was never more than an 1800. All you have to do is want to help lower-rated players get their good games published.

I do not plan to publish whole crosstables in the magazine; I think that space is better used on games and columns. I will place crosstables on a webpage so you can see them - either the ACF webpage or our club's webpage. Crosstables are important, but not worth the cost of a printed page when we can put them up from free. Of course, if the members revolt at this development, I may change my mind.

In addition to Bill's games, I have included a rook endgame of my own that should be valuable to those of you wanting to become better at rook endings - and remember 60% of all endings are rook endings! I also have started a column designed to improve your rating through training exercises. I hope they help.

Well, now on to chess!

Steven B. Dowd

2001 Alabama State Championship

A very exciting State Championship won by Bill Melvin! Kirk Petty took on the responsibilities of running the championship in Birmingham, and secured a nice location. Matthew Puckett won both the blitz and the G/10 Championships (sharing the G/10 with Ozgur Aktunc), but finished half a point behind Bill, losing the crucial round 5 game to the Melvinator. Matthew and Tim Bond placed second, with Tim taking the A prize. Places were as follows:

Bill Melvin - 1st with 5.5/6

Matthew Puckett and Tim Bond - 2nd with 5/6

Top Expert - Frisco Del Rosario with 4.5

Top A - Tim Bond

Top B - Charles Cleveland, Jerry Wheeler, and Mark Stribling with 4/6

Top C - Miles Melvin and Ed Dean with 4/6

Top D - Sherman Ashmore with 4/6

Top Unr. - Matthew Clay with 3/6

Congratulations to Bill and all the other winners at the State!!!

Bill Melvin Annotates!

Bill Melvin, the current king of Alabama chess, annotates four games for us. Bill's annotations are always clever and exact. - Ed.

Three weeks before the Alabama State Championship a one day tournament was held in Murfreesboro. I played reasonably well and finished in clear first including the following two games.

Bill Melvin (2200) Matt Puckett (2174)
Murfreesboro August 11, 2001 Round 4 Board 2 Game/75

1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3 dxc3 4. Nxc3 Nc6
5. Nf3 d6 6. Bc4 a6

I rarely play the Smith-Morra gambit. This is probably only my second or third attempt. I don't believe the gambit is quite sound. On the other hand, I wasn't prepared for Matt's Kalashnikov Sicilian (1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 e5) and felt I had better chances in a foggy gambit than something Matt plays every tournament.

7. O-O Nf6 8. Qe2 Bg4 9. Rd1 Qc8

Matt has played quickly so far and I've been out of book since move 6. In an effort to "look like I know what I'm doing", I've been playing the 'normal' Smith-Morra moves without much thinking. These moves are probably not the best against Matt's system. I shouldn't mechanically play any of my last three moves. As it turns out, I've stumbled into a "killing field" for Matt where he routinely beats opponents from this precise position.

After a long think, I decided that white needed to play against black's lag in development and especially the weakened b6 square. Matt spoke highly of white's 10th move after the game and initially thought that it might refute his system. Everything still looks unclear to me.

10. Na4 Bxf3 11. gxf3 Ne5

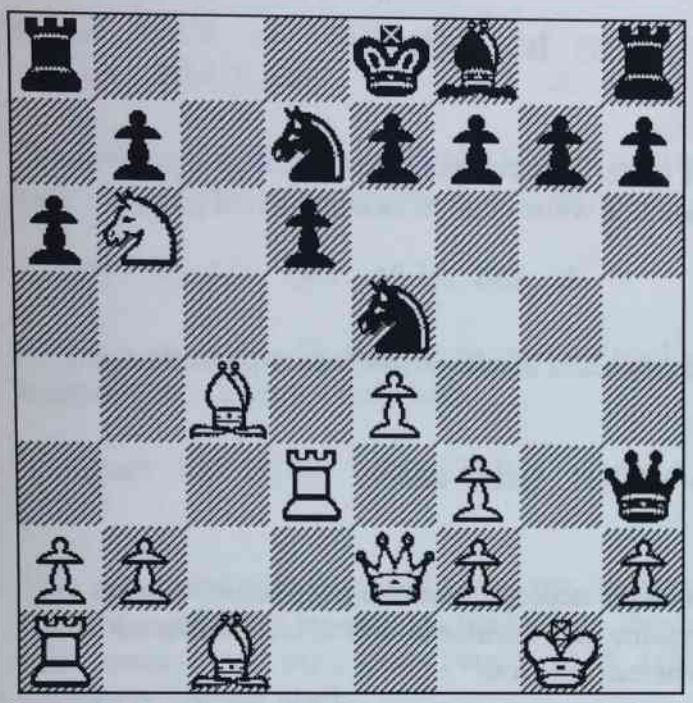
My danger sense was ringing loud and true by now. I had a bad feeling when I had to capture 11. gxf3 since 11. Qxf3 would lose a piece to 11. ... Ne5.

12. Nb6 Qh3

By now I wasn't happy at all. It appeared that I had to walk a tightrope to keep from getting checkmated. The first move that came to mind here was 13. Bf4, but the f3 pawns falls straight away and black will gain tempi against the f4 bishop as part of the attack. Gee, that knight looks like it is worth at least a rook...

13. Rd3! Nxd3

Matt showed me 13. ... Nfd7! a few weeks later and claimed that was black's best. Moves like that aren't obvious and just goes to show how complicated chess can be.



Melvin-Puckett after 13. ... Nfd7 (analysis) Is Black winning?

14. Qxd3 Nd7 15. Qb3! Ne5 16. Qa4 Kd8 17. Be2 Rb8

I was happy with my position by now. I wasn't worried about a queen and knight delivering checkmate with my bishop on e2 and black still lagging in development. My computer likes black by a pawn and a half. Machines, like humans, often have problems evaluating positions with material inequalities.

18. Bf4 Nc6 19. Rc1 Qh4

After the game, Matt preferred 19. Bxa6 for white. That was a candidate, but I was eager to get a new attacker into the game.

20. Rxc6 bxc6 21. Qxc6 Qh3 22. Bxa6 e5 23. Bd2 Rxb6
24. Ba5 Qd7 25. Bxb6 Ke7

Now I'm winning. The easiest win is to simply start the a and b pawns on their promoting ways. I thought I was still in a king hunt and didn't want to stop hunting until I had bagged some material. It is silly for me to sacrifice two Exchanges and then start counting material.

26. Qc4 g6 27. Bc8 Qe8 28. f4 Kf6 29. Bb7 Kg7

30. Bd5 Be7 31. a4 Qd7

I finally move the a-pawn, but black has had a chance to reorganize his army. I'm starting to see a hint of time pressure as well. This game is still up for grabs.

32. f5 gxf5 33. Bxf7 Rc8 34. Qb3 fxe4 35. Be6 Rc1
36. Kg2 Qb7?

This is the move that the computer doesn't like. The computer has black up a pawn and a half after 36. ... Qe8. The text move leads to a white edge of two and a half pawns.

37. Bd5? Qc8

Now the computer likes black again by a pawn and a half. White was supposed to play 37. Qg3. These positions are tough!

38. Qg3 Kh8 39. Be3 Rc7 40. Bh6 Bf6 41. Bxe4 Rc4
42. Qf3 Qe6 43. b3 Rb4

Things get complicated and I no longer had the necessary time to keep score. Matt is able to come back into the game and the game gets decided in a time scramble after he overlooks a one move checkmate in an unclear position.

Time Scramble. White wins. 1 – 0

Peter Bereolos (2359) Bill Melvin (2200)
Murfreesboro August 11, 2001 Round 5 Board 1 Game/75

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5 4. cxb5 a6
5. Nc3 axb5 6. e4 b4 7. Nb5 d6

The Zaitsev Variation of the Benko Gambit used to give me headaches as black. Now, I look forward to playing against it. It is a very dangerous opening for both sides.

8. Bf4 Nxe4 9. Qe2 g5 10. Be5 dxe5

I don't recall seeing 10. Be5 in any opening books. Peter routinely plays it so I'm sure it is somebody's theory somewhere.

11. Qxe4 Bg7 12. d6 Ra5 13. Rd1 O-O 14. h4 g4
15. h5 ...

This is the third time Peter and I have reached the position after 14. ... g4. I won the first encounter and Peter managed to hold a draw down two pawns the second time we tested these waters. Both other times Peter tried 15. dxe7 Qxe7 16. Nd6 with complications that ultimately favored black.

15. ... f5 16. Qc4 e6 17. h6 Bf6
18. Qxc5 Bd7 19. Qxb4 Na6 20. Qb3 Nc5

White is clearly busted. It is unclear where Peter has gone wrong. The entire line with 10. Be5 may be questionable.

21. Qc2 Bxb5 22. b4 Ba4 23. Qc4 Bxd1

White's army on h1, g1, and f1 decided to sit this one out much to the dismay of white's king. Black is eager to trade off all of white's developed pieces.

24. bxc5 Qd7

Capturing the rook with 24. bxa5 offered no hope after 24. ... Qxd6. I like moves like 24. ... Qd7. The queen move quietly holds the only weak square in black's camp (e6) while making preparations to bring the remaining black pieces into the game.

25. Qc3 Qa4 26. Bc4 Kf7

Even the black king has a job (guarding e6). Chess is all about employment!

27. c6 e4 28. Qc1 Bc2 29. Bb3 Bxb3 30. axb3 Qb4 resigns 0 – 1

The State Championship was my friend once again as I captured State Title number seven. The lone draw and the crucial game against Matt Puckett are shown below.

Bill Melvin (2200) Sven Mannsfeld (1940)
Alabama State Championship September 2, 2001
Round 4 Board 1 45/90 SD/60

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6

I thought for a good while here. In practice, I have trouble winning against the Najdorf variation. I've been playing an early Qf3 (instead of f4) lately with decent success. I've never understood why I score so well with 6. Bg5 against the Richter-Rauzer (5. ... Nc6 instead of 5. ... a6) and yet so poorly against the Najdorf.

6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Be7 8. Qf3 Qa5

This was a new move to me. I still don't understand the purpose behind it. It has a poor theoretical reputation as well. It doesn't stop castling, threaten e4, or gain a tempo attacking the g5 bishop.

9. O-O-O Bd7 10. Bc4 Nc6 11. Bb3 ...

This completes the ECO book line which gives white a big advantage (plus over minus). I don't recall ever looking at this line before. I do remember a similar variation where allowing white to play Bc4 was bad for black.

11. ... h6

The moment of truth is here. Trading bishop for knight is commonly done in this type of position and isn't a concession. Retreating the bishop is okay too. Black might follow 12. Bh4 with 12. ... g5 or 12. ... Qh5. I went ahead and captured as I was convinced that black had to answer 12. Bxf6 with 12. ... gxf6.

12. Bxf6 Bxf6

This was a wakeup call. I had planned on the forcing variation 13. Nxc6 Bxc6 14. Rxd6 Bxc3 15. bxc3 and I now saw that 15. ... Qa3 wins a rook. The other forcing choice is 15. Qxc3 Qxc3 16. bxc3 Bxe4 and black is better.

Although the forcing variation I had planned didn't work, I still liked my position. I didn't like black's queen on a5 and didn't think the knight on c6 or the bishop on d7 were particularly threatening unless I initiated some exchanges. I felt the d6 square was a weakness which black was trying to offset by exchanging on c3. With one move, I'm

able to answer all of these concerns and move towards a clear advantage. My opponent said after the game that he thought he had equalized after my meek appearing move. I disagree. Quiet moves can be among the strongest in the game.

13. Nde2! Qc7 14. Qd3 Be7 15. Rhe1 Na5

My opponent criticized this move as spoiling his position after the game. Grabbing the bishops is an interesting idea which threatens to leave black with an advantage under the right conditions. I'll maintain that white is better regardless and this is as good a try as any. As usual, the computer likes black by 1/4th a pawn!

16. Nd4 Nxb3 17. axb3 O-O-O?

I don't know what to suggest. Maybe 17. ... g6, 17. ... O-O (the computer's move) or something. Black looks busted now.

18. Nf5! exf5 19. Nd5 fxe4 20. Rxe4 Bb5?

I thought black might play 20. ... Bf5 which I planned to answer decisively with 21. Rxe7! and black can resign. The text move drops a piece.

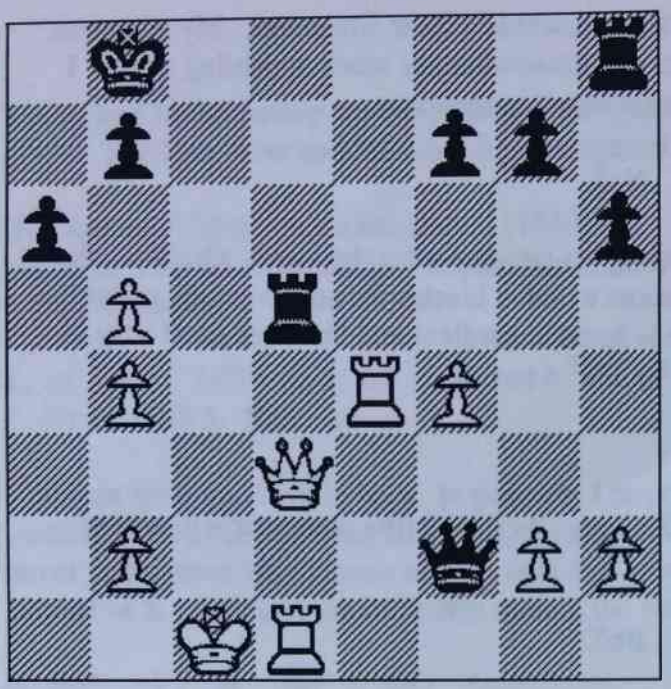
21. c4! Qc5 22. b4 Qf2

At the time, I thought sacrificing the queen with 22. ... Qxd5 might be black's best hope.

23. Nxe7 Kb8 24. cxb5 d5!!

Out of nowhere comes a top-of-the-line swindle attempt. Don't look at the next move and see if you can see why the pawn is poisonous. I never saw it coming.

25. Nxd5?? Rxd5!!



Melvin-Mannsfeld after 25. ... Rxd5!!

Harsh reality dawns on me. The main variation runs 26. Qxd5 Rc8 27. Kb1 Qc2 28. Ka2 Qa4 29. Kb1 Qc2 with a draw by perpetual check. I simply had to play 25. Rd4 with an easy win in all lines.

After a long think, I had to decide between:

a) Allowing the perpetual check draw. This is probably best.

b) Sacrificing the queen after 26. Rxd5 Rc8 27. Qc4 Rxc4 28. Rxc4. This is interesting but the black queen already has many targets. Black may be winning in this line but it isn't altogether clear.

c) Going into a rook and pawn ending with the worse pawn structure and trying to outplay my opponent with a more active rook. This is the variation I chose although I'm now convinced it is the weakest.

26. Qxd5 Rc8 27. Rc4 Qxf4 28. Kb1 Qxc4 29. Qxc4 Rxc4
30. bxa6 bxa6 31. Rd6 Kb7 32. Ka2 Rc6 33. Rd7 Rc7
34. Rd6 Draw

1/2 - 1/2

So, I was swindled from a piece up position. I'm still shaking my head. 24. ... d5!! was a great attempt at saving a hopeless position. This was most humbling!

Matt Puckett (2174) Bill Melvin (2200)
Alabama State Championship September 3, 2001
Round 5 Board 1 45/90 SD/60

1. g3 e5 2. c4 Nf6 3. Bg2 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5
5. Nc3 Be6 6. Nf3 Nc6

Everyone that sees black's position moans. This is a reverse Sicilian with white up a full tempo. My goal was to catch up in development and obtain something close to white's normal edge in a Sicilian. Matt was 1/2 point ahead of me on the crosstable and I really felt a need to play for a win.

7. O-O Be7

Of course, black can't go for a Yugoslav attack setup with 7. ... Bc5 since white has 8. Qa4.

8. d4 exd4

During the post-mortem, Matt never liked his position after 8. d4. During the game , I agreed that 8. d4 was thematic and this was the move I feared the most. After all, in the common position after 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be3 Bg7 7. f3 O-O 8. Qd2 Nc6 9. O-O-O, all the books give 9. ... d5! as being best. This is black's energetic way of punishing 9. O-O-O (instead of 9. Bc4) and leads to very complicated positions (although white typically scores well).

However, this position is most different. It isn't a reverse Yugoslav Attack Sicilian. Black is down a tempo and has placed the f8 bishop on e7. Instead of ...f6 and ...Qd7, black has prepared to modestly castle kingside. The thematic looking 8. d4 appears to unveil weaknesses in white's queenside structure.

9. Nxd4 Nxd4 10. Qxd4 Nxc3 11. Qxc3 O-O

This invites white to snatch the b-pawn with 12. Bxb7. I thought I was bluffing and white could snatch the pawn. Matt thought black had plenty of compensation after 12. ... Rb8 13. Bg2 Bf6. Black does appear to have the easier position to play in this line.

12. Bf4 c6 13. Rad1 Qb6 14. b3 Bb4
15. Qc2 Qc5 16. Qb1 Qe7 17. e4 a5

This was the idea of black's last six moves. With queens on or without, black is planning an attack against the weakened white queenside pawns. Both black bishops coordinate nicely against this quadrant of the board. For white's part, some defensive move instead of the aggressive looking 17. e4 might have been better.

18. Rd3 a4 19. Rfd1 axb3 20. axb3 Rfd8

21. Be3 h6 22. f4 Rxd3 23. Rxd3 Bc5
24. Bxc5 Qxc5 25. Kh1 f6!

As it turns out, this is a great move. Matt was hoping to tempt me with 25. ... Qf2 26. f5 Ra2 27. Qf1 where black loses a piece! I didn't see all of that and just wanted to keep the bishop pointed towards the b3 pawn.

26. Qb2 Qb4 27. Qb1 Bc4!

Either give me the b-pawn or accept a passive rook. The game is going well whenever your opponent is faced with such unpleasant choices.

28. Re3 Ra3 29. Bf1 Bxf1 30. Qxf1 Rxb3 31. Rxb3 Qxb3

Usually queen and pawn endings are to be avoided whenever you have an extra pawn. In this case, black holds all the trumps.

32. Qe2 c5 33. e5 Qd5 34. Kg1 fxe5 35. fxe5 Qe6

This move appears passive, but is really the best way to limit white's counterplay and get the decisive c and b pawns moving.

36. Kf2 c4 37. Qe3 b5 38. Qc3 Qd5 39. Ke3 Qd3!

This move brought the crowd to the table! My thinking was that king and pawn endings are easier to win than queen and pawn endings. That is, of course, if the actual ending is a win. I certainly had the strong 39. ... Qc5 40. Ke4 b4 at my disposal. In any queen and pawn ending I would have to be on constant guard against perpetual check. I analyzed to the best of my ability and then played the text move.

40. Qxd3 cxd3 41. Kxd3 Kf7 42. Kd4 Ke6 43. Kc5 Kxe5
44. Kxb6 g5

This move swayed me towards 39. ... Qd3 over 39. ... Qc5. I felt the white structure could be weakened before committing the king. I was surprised that the race was as close as it ended up being.

45. Kc6! Kf5

I had originally intended 45. ... g4 and running the king around from e5-e4-f3-g2xh2xg3. Then I saw that 45. Kc6! g4 46. Kd7 Ke4 47. Ke6 Kf3 48. Kf5 h5 49. Kg5 Kg2 50. Kxh5 Kxh2 51. Kxg4 and white ends up winning. Now that would be most heartbreaking. After some thought, I decided to change the entry path of my king to e5-f5-g4-h3xh2.

46. Kd5 Kg4 47. Ke4 Kh3 48. Kf3 Kxh2 49. Kg4 Kg2
resigns 0-1

Training Corner - Raise Your Rating By 100 points!

By Steven Dowd, "The Adult Chess Coach"

Every issue, we will have a training corner - an exercise designed to raise your rating. I wish I could guarantee results, but can't - chess is all about hard work and ability - and we are all limited by that. But I guarantee that you will play better chess if you follow my training exercises.

This issue's exercise is as follows - find a partner who is close to you in rating. I want you to play 5-10 minute games FROM EACH SIDE from the following positions. That will be a minimum of 6 games, but I would recommend more than that. Before playing, each player should write out how they feel about the position to include specific analysis and how they "feel" about the position. Ideally, after the games are played, you will check your analysis both with a program like Fritz and a local strong player of at least class A strength.

#1

Fogarasi-Beliavsky, Hungary 1999 (side line)

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. Be3 c6 5. h3 Nbd7 6. f4 b5 7. a3 a6 8. Nf3 Nb6 9. Bd3 e6!? 10. 0-0 c5 11. f5 exf 12. exf c4 13. fxg cxd 14. exf7 Kxf7

#2

Same as above, only

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. Be3 c6 5. h3 Nbd7 6. f4 b5 7. a3 a6 8. Nf3 Nb6 9. Bd3 e6!? 10. 0-0 c5 11. f5 c4 12. fxe6 cxd 13. exf7

Contrast the two lines when you are done.

#3

Gurevich-Dorfman, Bundesliga 2000/01

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. d4 Bb4 5. Qa4 Nc6 6. e3 0-0 7. Bd2 a6 8. a3 Be7 9. Qc2 dxc4 10. Bxc4 Bd6 11. Ne4 e5! 12. Nxd6 cxd 13.Bc3 e4! 14. d5 Na5 15. Ba2

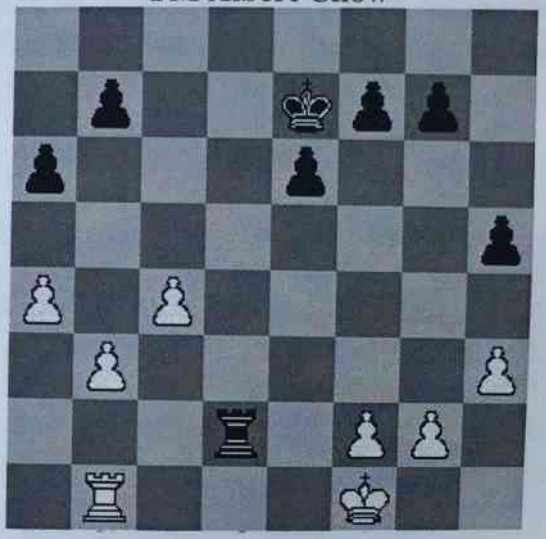
Drawing a Rook Ending a Pawn Down

Not for the Faint of Heart!!

By Steven B. Dowd

Although the Russian proverb says that "All rook endings are drawn," I would add that drawing them is not always easy from a practical perspective. You need energy, attention to detail, eternal vigilance, and most of all, **no fear**! I would like to start from the following diagram position in my game with Albert Chow, a former US Open Champion, from the last (2001) Mid-America Class Championship, Master Section.

FM Albert Chow



Steven Dowd
After move 32 for black.

In the opening/middlegame, I had overestimated the 3/2 versus 4/3 majorities. We had followed a game of Sveshnikov's for 21 moves (although I only knew the first 14, since I am not much of an opening theoretician), where my opponent significantly improved on the line selected by Sveshnikov's opponent. In our post-mortem, Chow noted that he felt 3/2 versus 4/3 does not constitute any real advantage, despite what many books say.

My main problem at this juncture consists of black's active rook and his ability to move his king into the game. I had underestimated the weakness at b3 and earlier, to defend this weakness, had to allow an exchange of rooks. As you probably all know, most rook endings are easier to defend with both sides having two rooks instead of one (unless, of course, you allow unreasonable activity like him having 2 rooks on the seventh).

I had to find a way to activate my king and rook. I knew that this might possibly involve going into an ending where I was down a pawn, however, I also knew that if I could let him win a pawn on the queenside, trade those remaining pawns on the queenside, then I could draw the 4 versus 3 majority. However, note that white's main weakness is at b3. A danger exists in letting black win the b3 pawn and then letting the king penetrate to win

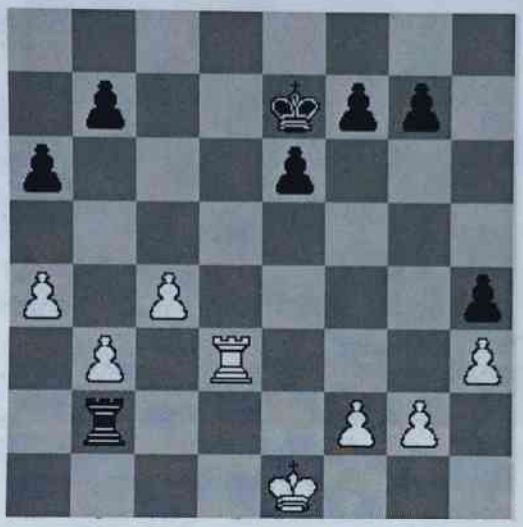
the split pawns on a4 and c4. I had a plan I thought was good, and had seen several moves earlier. Perhaps this plan should have failed, but it seemed logical at the time.

33. Ke1 Rc2 34. Rd1 Rc3 35. Rb1 Rc2

I figured if he tried to infiltrate with his king here, I could play Rd1+ and let the king come in, but bring my rook to the seventh, and win as many pawns as he does.

36. Rd1 Rb2 37. Rd3 h4

FM Albert Chow



Steven Dowd

Black has just played 27. ... h4

I thought this was a good move, although any master worth his salt probably would have played it. The idea of course is to make white, should he trade the pawns with g3, have pawns on g3 and h3 that are weak (along with now having a 3/2 majority, which I still think is important, and the k pawn becomes passed). This may seem inconsequential now, but it will have great meaning later. As Shereshesky notes in his endgame books, the first rule of winning endings is "Never hurry!" Unlike the middlegame, where plans typically must be executed exactly and quickly, hurrying in the ending often turns a win into a draw or worse.

38. c5

I knew this move probably deserved a !?. But I did have a plan, which I had been carrying around in my mind since around move 30. The idea is to try not to jettison a pawn if at all possible, or if I do jettison a pawn, make sure it is not the b pawn. Split pawns would be disastrous, not only because they are weak and might be won by a king infiltration, but also because it then becomes harder to trade pawns.

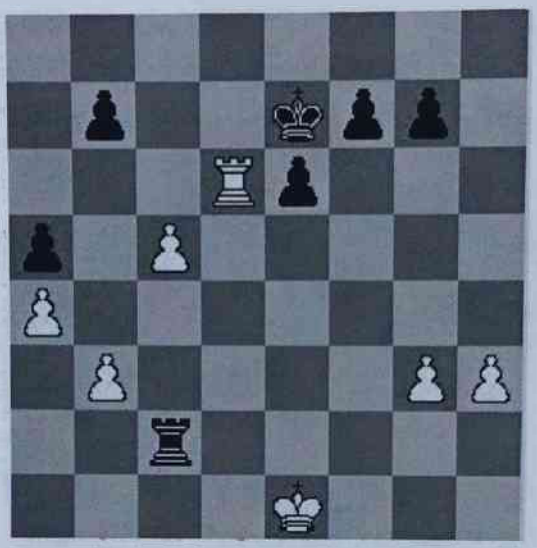
38. ... a5 39. g3 hg 40. fg Rc2

Starting to look decisive for black, but I had confidence in my plan.

41. Rd6

This is the start of my plan. The idea is to play Rb6 if he captures the c pawn, and if Rc7 to hold, then Rb5 wins the a pawn.

FM Albert Chow



Steven Dowd

White has just played 40. Rd6

41. ... b5!

This may not deserve an exclam, and I may only be giving it one because I did not take it properly into consideration. I think my reply is the only one, since the whole point of getting to this position was to activate my rook, and clear up the queenside situation, albeit by sacrificing a pawn.

42. Rc6 bxa4 43. bxa4 Kd7 44. Rd6+ Ke7

Chow obviously repeated the position to gain some clock time. He was behind on the clock, and as Shereshevsky also notes in his endgame books, repeating moves/position does two things for you: gains some clock time and helps to clarify the position in your mind. The only potential danger is that I would find some way to improve my position, but Chow is only taking a minimal risk there. He could move the K to c7, but then I think Ra6! draws since he loses 2 kingside pawns and my h-pawn can march as well as his a pawn.

45. Rc6 Rc4 46. Rc7+ Kf6

King is now away from the queenside and I do have some threats with the c-pawn, so I am able to clarify that side of the board, finally.

47. c6 Rxa4 48. Ra7 Rc4 49. Rxa5 Rxc6 50. Kf2 g5 51. Kf3 Kg6 52. Ra8 Rc3+

53. Kf2 f5 54. Ra4 Rd3 55. Ra6 Kf6 56. Ra4 Rd2+

Fell asleep at the switch! The draw seemed so likely, so easy, that I "forgot" about my weaknesses on g3 and h3. With my rook on a8 or on a2, the position is drawn, I think. I can either hold h3 on h8 or stop him from checking me back to the back rank. Obviously I should not have allowed the Rook check on d2. This is a valuable endgame lesson – you can get this far but lose because you get lazy (or perhaps tired – we had now been playing for 5 hours). Now I have to go back since I cant let him play Rh2 – that position is simply lost. So I got my king off the last rank by sacrificing a pawn, but now have to put him back. And we all know that one of the surest way to lose an ending is by having an inactive king.

Pal Benko says (as did David Bronstein) that one of the surest ways to lose a game is to sit there and reflect on what "might have been." Here I am facing a former US Open Champion, having made it 50 plus moves to an ending that is drawable but not equal, and I mess it up. But instead of reflecting on that, which would surely lose, I simply got up, told the TD I was going to the gift shop and would be right back (I always worry that people will think I am cheating by going to my room to fire up Fritz, not that the Teutonic 2600 plays the ending all that well). I went and got a few Fig Newtons and a Diet 7 up (already hit my caffeine limit) and came back to think how to draw. The walk helped to clarify my mind and the "Figs" gave me some slow releasing energy to help my brain work better. Vassily Smyslov always said the best way to get thinking right again was to take a short walk.

57. Kg1 Ke5 58. h4 ....

OK, here is my idea. Let him get connected passed pawns, but set up a position in which his king cant get back to my passer, or if he does, gives me time to win one of this passers, which with my king in front of the other one should be a draw. Or if he sees the better move of trading pawns, hunker down and hope for the best. That position is objectively if not theoretically won (although it may be won in theory as well), due to his better king and rook, as well as being a pawn up. I cant imagine a mere mortal like myself could hold it.

58. ... g4?

Mistake and countermistake. Tartakover said the winner was the one who made the next-to-last mistake; in this case, it throws a win away to a draw, I think. GM Gurevich later showed Chow how to win with gxh4. g4 seems logical – get the pawn closer, take up space around f3/h3, get connected passers, but I am not sure it wins and neither was Gurevich. The move actually probably mirrors Jonathan Tisdall's differentiation of *natural* versus *logical* moves – the move is natural, but not logical, since the logical move wins. Unfortunately, as Tisdall notes, we often mistake natural moves for logical ones since we can't calculate all possibilities out to the end.

59. Ra7 Ke4 60. h5 Rd1+ 61. Kg2 Rd2+ 62. Kg1 Rd8

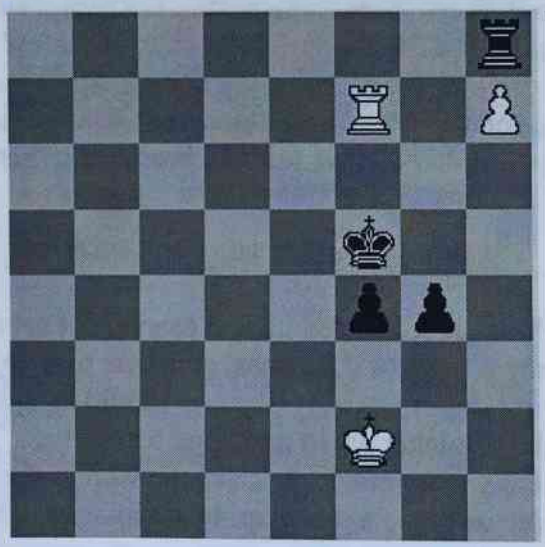
Forced to get back to the h-pawn. Thus I fixed the problem of his active rook and my inactive king, but he gets connected passers. But if you want to draw, you cant have fear. Now is the following continuation forced? I don't know based on the analysis I have been able to do, but I have not been able to find anything different or that would lead to a different result.

63. h6 e5 64. h7 Rh8 65. Kf2 f4 66. gxf exf 67. Rg7 Kf5 68. Rf7+ Kg5 69. Rg7+ Kh7

70. Rf7 Kg5 71. Rg7+ Kf5 72. Rf7+ Ke5 73. Rg7 Kf5 74. Rf7+

Here Chow agreed to the draw. Interestingly a visiting Russian master secured a similar position against Andrew Karklins in the last round (only the Russian master's passed pawn was on b7, not h7) and Karklins also could not find a win over the board. (note: Several of the strongest players at the UABCC also post-mortemed a number of the positions from move 60 on, and could find no win for black) Chow and Karklins post-mortemed it for quite a while as well, but found no win. The position is certainly scary looking for black, but remember that cowards don't get to draw the hard games!

FM Albert Chow



Steven Dowd

After 74. Rf7+

Final Position, Dowd-Chow.

Fritz (not the greatest endgame analyst despite his high rating) assesses black as up more than one pawn, but finds nothing better than submitting to the perpetual.

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ALABAMA CHESS FEDERATION, INCORPORATED

BY-LAWS
Amended by Vote of The Membership 21 February 1999 and Further Amended by the Executive Officers on 16 March 1999

Amended by Vote of The Membership ???

SECTION I
NAME, PURPOSES, LOCATION, AND FISCAL YEAR.

I.1 **NAME AND PURPOSE:** The name of the Federation shall be known as the "ALABAMA CHESS FEDERATION". (Herein designated as the ACF.)

The purpose of the ACF is to promote CHESS in the State of Alabama.

I.2 **LOCATION:** The principal office of the ACF shall be the mailing address of the current President until such time as a permanent location has been established.

I.3 **FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year of the ACF shall end on Labor Day Weekend in September upon completion of the Annual Meeting.

SECTION II
MEMBERS ACF AFFILIATES

II.1 **MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION:** Any individual or organization interested in Chess may become, respectively, a Member or an Affiliate upon payment of the annual dues. There shall be three classes of individual membership and one class of affiliate membership.

(a) **REGULAR MEMBERSHIP:** Any individual may become a Regular Member upon the payment of annual dues of $10.00.

(b) **LIFE MEMBERSHIP:** Any individual may become a life member upon one time payment of dues of $250. A member may be conferred a life membership with no fee by the Executive Board's unanimous vote at any meeting held after reasonable and sufficient notice or by unanimous vote of the membership attending any membership meeting held after reasonable and sufficient notice.

(d) **HONORARY MEMBER:** The Executive Board or the membership-at-large may designate certain individuals Honorary Members of ACF.

(c) **AFFILIATE:** Any organized group of chess players may become an Affiliate upon the payment of annual dues of $15.00.

II.2 LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP: All individual and Affiliate Memberships, except Life Memberships, expire in the next calendar year on the last day of the month in which the Member joined. Life Memberships expire upon the life Member's death or resignation. Memberships and affiliations may be extended for a total of three years by advance payment of additional appropriate annual dues.

II.3 PRIVILEGES:

(a) **COMPETITION:** A member shall be permitted to compete in any event held by the ACF, subject to such rules and regulations as may govern the event. The member's membership must be valid throughout the entire event.

(b) **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Regular and Life Members and Affiliates shall receive annual subscriptions to an official publication. There may be more than one such publication, aimed at different interest groups. For example, it may be appropriate to have a separate publication for school-aged members.

II.4 ANNUAL MEETINGS: The location, date, and time of the annual meeting shall be specified by the Executive Board and published in the issue of an official publication immediately preceding the Labor Day State Championship Tournament.

II.5 REGULAR MEETINGS. Regular meetings of the members may be held at such places within the State of Alabama and at such times as the members may determine.

II.6 SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings of the members may be held at any time and at any place within the State of Alabama. Special meetings may be called by the President, by the Executive Board, or by written application of twenty or more Regular or Life Members.

II.7 CALL AND NOTICE:

(a) **ANNUAL AND REGULAR MEETINGS:** The call or notice for annual or regular meetings of Members shall be published in the issue of an official publication immediately preceding the meeting.

(b) **SPECIAL MEETINGS:** Notice of the date, time and place of special meetings shall be published in a preceding issue of an official publication.

II.8 QUORUM: At any meeting of the members, five (5) Members present in person shall constitute a quorum. Any meeting may be adjourned to such date or dates, not to exceed three (3) days after the first session of the meeting, by a majority of the votes cast on the question, whether or not a quorum is present, and the meeting may be held as adjourned without further notice.

II.9 ACTION BY VOTE: Each Regular or Life Member shall have one vote. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the votes properly cast by Regular or Life Members present in person shall decide any question, including election to any office, unless otherwise provided by these By-Laws or the rules of order.

SECTION III
SPONSORS, BENEFACTORS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND ADVISERS

The Executive Board or the membership-at-large may designate certain persons or groups of persons as sponsors, benefactors, contributors, advisers, or such other title as they deem appropriate. After due recognition, these persons shall become Honorary Members.

SECTION IV
EXECUTIVE BOARD

IV.1 MEMBERSHIP: The Executive Board shall consist of the Executive Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Scholastic Vice President, and Editor. If required by the Executive Board, any Officer shall give the ACF a bond for the faithful performance of their duties in such amount and surety as shall be satisfactory to the Executive Board.

IV.2 TENURE: Each Executive Board Member shall hold office until the Annual Meeting of the following year and until that member's successor is elected and qualified, or until the Member sooner dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes disqualified.

IV.3 POWERS: The affairs of the ACF shall be managed by the Executive Board which shall have and may exercise all the powers of the ACF, except those powers reserved to the members by these By-Laws.

IV.4 COMMITTEES: The Executive Board may elect or appoint one or more committees and may delegate to any such committee or committees any or all of their powers. Any committee to which the powers of the Executive Board are delegated shall consist solely of Executive Board members. Unless the Executive Board otherwise designates, committees shall conduct their affairs in the same manner as is provided in these By-Laws for the Executive Board. The members of any committee shall remain in office at the pleasure of the Executive Board.

IV.5 SUSPENSION OR REMOVAL: An Executive Board member may be suspended or removed from office: (a) with or without cause by a majority vote of the ACF Members or (b) with cause by vote of a majority of the Executive Board. An Executive Board Member may be removed with cause only after reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard.

IV.6 RESIGNATION: An Executive Board Member may resign by delivering his written resignation to an Executive Officer, or to the ACF at its principal office, or by tendering his resignation at a meeting of the members of the Executive Board. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt (unless specified to be effective at some other time) and acceptance thereof shall not be necessary to make it effective unless it so states.

IV.7 VACANCIES: Any vacancy in the Executive Board may be filled by the members of the Executive Board. Each successor shall hold office for the unexpired term or until the successor sooner dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes disqualified. The Executive Board shall have and may exercise all their powers notwithstanding the existence of one or more vacancies in their number.

IV.8 REGULAR MEETING: Regular meetings of the Executive Board may be held at any place within the State of Alabama and at such times as the Executive Board may determine.

IV.9 SPECIAL MEETINGS: Special meetings of the Executive Board may be held at any place within the State of Alabama when called by the President or by three(3) or more Executive Board Members.

IV.10 CALL AND NOTICE:

(a) **REGULAR MEETINGS:** No call or notice shall be required for the two regular meetings of the Executive Board which will take place at the Queen of Hearts Tournament in February, and the State Championship on Labor Day week-end in September.

(b) **SPECIAL MEETINGS:** Reasonable notice of the time and place of special meetings of the Executive Board shall be given to each Executive Board Member. Such notice need not specify the purposes of the meeting, unless otherwise required by these By-Laws or unless there is to be considered at the meeting: (1) amendments to these By-Laws, or (2) removal or suspension of an Executive Board Member. Special meetings may be held via telephone conference call, or other electronic methods, at the discretion of the Executive Board.

(c) **REASONABLE AND SUFFICIENT NOTICE:** Except as otherwise expressly provided, it shall be reasonable and sufficient notice to an Executive Board Member to be sent notice by mail (or electonic mail) to the Member's usual or last known business or residence address, or to be given notice in person or by telephone at least ten (10) days before the meeting.

IV.12 QUORUM: At any meeting of the Executive Board including the President (or the Vice President if the President is unable or unwilling to attend), three (3) Executive

Board Members, shall constitute a quorum. Any meeting may be adjourned by a majority of the votes cast upon the question, whether or not a quorum is present.

IV.13 ACTION BY VOTE: When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the Executive Board Members present and voting shall decide any question unless otherwise provided for in these By-Laws or in the rules of order.

IV.14 ACTION BY WRITING: Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Executive Board may be taken without a meeting if all Executive Board Members are given a mail ballot on the matter and the returned ballots are filed with the records of the meetings of the Executive Board. Balloting may be done via US mail or by electronic mail. Such votes shall be treated for all purposes as a vote at a meeting, provided at least four 4) votes are returned.

SECTION V.
OFFICERS AND AGENTS

V.1 NUMBER AND QUALIFICATION: The Officers of the ACF shall be Executive Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Scholastic Vice-President, and Editor. The President or the Executive Board may appoint additional Officers, such as Members of the Nominations Committee, as it may determine. An Appointed Officer shall not have a vote at Executive Board meetings unless he is also an elected Member of the Executive Board.

V.2 ELECTION: The Executive Officers shall be elected annually at the annual membership meeting held during the State Championship, by a majority of those voting. Appointed Officers may be elected by the Executive Board at any time.

V.3 PRESIDENT: The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the ACF and, subject to control of the Executive Board, shall have general charge and supervision of the affairs of the ACF and shall be responsible for the ACF's general welfare. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Members and at all Executive Board meetings, except as the Members or the Executive Board otherwise determine. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and commissions.

V.4 VICE PRESIDENT: The Vice President shall have such duties and powers as the Executive Board shall determine. The Vice resident shall have and may exercise all powers and duties of the President during the absence of the President or in the event of the President's inability to act.

V.5 SECRETARY/TREASURER: The Secretary/Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer and the chief accounting officer of the ACF. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be in charge of the ACF's financial affairs, funds, securities and valuable papers and shall keep full and accurate records thereof.

The Secretary/Treasurer may have other powers and duties as designated by the Executive Board or the President. The Secretary/Treasurer shall also be in charge of the ACF's books of accounts and accounting records, and of it's accounting procedures. The Secretary/Treasurer shall report at the membership and Executive Board meetings on the financial condition of the ACF. The Secretary/Treasurer shall record and maintain records of all proceedings of the members and Executive Board in a book or series of books kept for that purpose, which book or books shall be kept within the State of Alabama at the office of the Secretary/Treasurer or at the principle office of the ACF or its resident agent and shall be open at all reasonable times for inspection by any Member. Such book or books shall also contain records of all meetings of incorporation, and the original or attested copies of the Articles of Organization and the names of all Executive Board members and appointed officers and the addresses of each. If the Secretary/Treasurer is absent from any meeting of members or directors, a temporary secretary chosen at the meeting shall exercise the duties of the Secretary/Treasurer at that meeting.

V.6 **SCHOLASTIC VICE PRESIDENT:** The Scholastic Vice President shall have three-fold duties: (1) to develop, maintain, revise, and distribute a scholastic chess program, and to coordinate and aid chess education programs amongst the affiliates of ACF and other organizations as may request help; (2) to be responsible for the organization of ACF sponsored scholastic individual and team events; (3) to aid in the development of educational and competitive chess programs in the schools of the State of Alabama and be responsible for the advertising and distribution of the chess education program within the State of Alabama's school systems.

V.7 EDITOR: The Editor shall be responsible for the printing, publication, and distribution of all official publications of ACF. The Editor shall determine the format, layout and content of the official publications of ACF and shall solicit articles and tournament announcements from the Affiliates and Members or other sources he deems appropriate. The Editor may appoint assistants, as he deems appropriate, to handle printing, mailing, proof reading, or other duties associated with these. The President shall instruct the Editor as to the number of each edition to print. If there is more than one official publication, the Editor is responsible for all of them, unless the Executive Board appoints a separate officer for each publication. Official publications may include both print and electronic media.

V.8 **APPOINTED OFFICERS:** The Executive Board may appoint officers, such as members of the Elections, to chair special committees or to serve special functions. These appointed officers shall not be members of the Executive Board unless they have previously been or are subsequently elected to hold an Executive Office.

V.9 **SUSPENSION OR REMOVAL:** An appointed officer may be suspended or removed, with or without cause, by the President or by a vote of a majority of the Executive Board at any meeting of the Executive Board.

V.10 **RESIGNATION:** An officer may resign by delivering their written resignation to an executive officer, to a meeting of the members or the Executive Board, or to the principle office of ACF. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt (unless specified to be affective at another time) and acceptance thereof shall not be necessary to make it affective unless it so states.

V.11 **VACANCIES:** If the office of an executive officer becomes vacant, the members of the Executive Board may elect a successor. Each such successor shall hold office for the unexpired term, and in the case of an executive officer until the officer's successor is elected and qualified, or in each case until the officer sooner dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes disqualified.

SECTION VI
TOURNAMENTS

VI.1 TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION: The ACF shall run or seek bids for such title tournaments as the Alabama State Championship, the Alabama State Scholastic Championships, the Alabama State Scholastic Team Championships, and other such events that the Executive Board shall approve.

VI.2 ACF SPONSORED EVENTS: An ACF sponsored event shall be approved in format by the Executive Board and shall have a prize and/or trophy fund guaranteed by the ACF.

VI.3 ACF SANCTIONED EVENTS: An ACF sanctioned event shall be recognized by the Executive Board and shall require ACF membership of each participant. Membership in ACF may be waived for participants not residing in the State of Alabama at the discretion of the Executive Board.

VI.4 ALABAMA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: The ACF shall annually sponsor or sanction the Alabama State Championship, the Alabama Scholastic Championship, and the Alabama State Scholastic Team Championship.

SECTION VII
ANNUAL ELECTION PROCEDURES

VII.1 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: The Nominations Committee shall conduct the annual election of Executive Officers.

(a) A three member Nominations Committee and its chairperson shall be named by the Executive Board by the first day of July. Members of the Nominations Committee shall not be candidates for any of the Executive Offices.

(b) Duties of the Nominations Committee shall include the solicitation and/or receipt of nominations and candidate statements, the obtaining of an official roll of voting Members from the Secretary/Treasurer, the design and preparation of the voting and instructions, the specifications of the voting procedures, the counting of the voting, and the announcing of the results of the voting.

(c) In the event that a Nominations Committee cannot be formed or fails to execute its duties, the Secretary/Treasurer shall conduct the annual election of Executive Officers. Candidates for office shall be those Members nominated by the voting Members attending the annual membership meeting.

VII.2 NOMINATIONS: Nominations for all Executive Officers and Directors shall be submitted only by current Members of ACF. Nominees must be current Members of ACF.

VII.3 ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS: The chairperson of the Nominations Committee, or in the absence of a committee, the Secretary/Treasurer, shall announce the results of the voting immediately upon completion of the voting.

SECTION VIII
EXECUTION OF PAPERS

Except as the Executive Board may generally or in particular cases authorize the execution thereof in some other manner, all deeds, leases, transfers, contracts, bonds, notes, checks, drafts, and other obligations made, accepted or endorsed by the ACF shall be signed by the President or by the Secretary/Treasurer. Any recordable instrument purporting to effect an interest in real estate, executed in the name of ACF by two officers, of whom one is the President or the Vice President and the other is the Secretary/Treasurer, shall be binding on ACF in favor of the purchaser or other person relying in good faith on such instrument, notwithstanding any inconsistent provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, Resolutions or votes of the ACF.

SECTION IX
PERSONAL LIABILITY

The Members, Directors and Officers of ACF shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the ACF. All persons, corporations, or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claim against the ACF may look only to the funds and property of the ACF for the payment of any such contract or claim, or for the payment of any debt, damages, judgement or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from ACF.

SECTION X

The most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised*, shall be the rules of order at all meetings of the Membership and Executive Board and its committees.

SECTION XI
AMENDMENTS

These laws may be altered, amended or repealed in whole or in part by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting of the Executive Board except with respect to any provision thereof which by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these by-laws requires action by the Members, and providing that reasonable notice has been given.

XI.1 AMENDMENT ACTION BY THE MEMBERSHIP: These by-laws may also be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at any membership meeting provided such amendments are submitted in writing to the Secretary/Treasurer at least 90 days before the membership meeting.

XI.2 RATIFICATION AND LIMITATION OR REVISIONS TO BY-LAWS:

(a) **AMENDING THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION:** Alabama law, covering non-profit organizations, provides that any amendment affecting the substance of the Articles of Organization requires two-thirds (2/3) approval of the membership voting at a membership meeting. All proposed amendments to the Articles of Organization must be made available to the voting membership in the notice for the related membership meeting.

(b) **REPEALING BY-LAW CHANGES:** All by-law changes made by the Executive Board shall be voted at least thirty (30) days prior to the next regularly scheduled membership meeting.

Upcoming Tournaments

First Sunday of each month features the First Sunday Quads in Birmingham, under the direction of Dr. Ken Sloan.

Next Alabama "Big" Tournament will be the Queen of Hearts in February (date not yet set).

UABCC (Birmingham) holds quick chess events twice per month, occasional slow events such as G/30 or G/90, and one day tournaments beginning in February. See their website for more details.

Having a tournament? Let me know -

or

Steven Dowd

Alabama, let's play chess!!!